

Needham Human Rights Committee Minutes

February 26, 2015

Recorder: Marlene Schultz

Present: Marlene Schultz, Amelia Klein, Abdul Cader Asmal. Barry Ehrlich, Cynthia Ganung, , Bud Schram, Jeremy Sutherland

Amelia opened the meeting by sharing a thank you note from Sandy Cincotta, support services manager, for the gift we sent her while she was recuperating from surgery.

1. Minutes

- Minutes of January 2015 HRC meeting were approved as presented.

2. Old Business

- Committee Membership: A resident of the housing authority is interested. We hope she will be able to join us at a future meeting to see if she wants to pursue official membership. We currently have one opening and another opening will be coming up soon.
- Web Page: Ashok, Amelia and Marlene met this week to work on the content. Work on the website is continuing.
- Traces of the Trade: We will investigate the possibility of partnering with the schools for a fall program. Before our March meeting Bud and Jeremy will meet with Dr. Pizzi, high school principal to see if thinks this program would be of interest to them. Abdul and Cynthia will talk to the clergy about their support/interest in bringing this program to town. The format would be to have the program run at night for parents and community members (possibly in the Great Hall) and then have the program at the high school the following day.

3. New Business: An interesting discussion took place about the role of the committee, how decisions and issues are decided and prioritized. The committee is a town appointed committee that is advisory to the Selectmen. We see ourselves as the “eyes and ears” of the community concerning human rights. We plan educational programs; investigate complaints that come to us, co-sponsor town wide programs that are within our purview.

4. Reports

MLK Celebration Since we are co-sponsors of the event, Cynthia asked for feedback on Jan. 19 MLK Day Program

7 members attended, Jeremy was MC and 6 members helped with the refreshments

Members felt very positively about the program. It was felt that there was good child involvement, it flowed well, and it was a celebration of the good work that has been done and that the work needs to continue. It has been 5 years that it is now a community wide program and not run by the METCO program.

Diversity Summit

March 26 - Debby Irving, author of book "Growing Up White" - 7-8:30pm Library

May. 17 storyteller Janice Allen

Oct. 17 Needham Diversity Summit 4

Immigration Justice task Force

Ongoing concerns national and state

Welcoming event at Chambers Housing Authority- March 29

Chinese Friends of Needham New Years celebration - Jan. 24 - Newman School - large attendance, good food & program

Needham High School: Jeremy reported that there is a focus on diversity and race relations

Town Issues: we discussed the graffiti found in the boy's bathroom at Pollard

5. Other: The custodian took a group photo that we will submit with the town report.

Next Meeting: March 19, 2015 (Recorder: Jo-Anne)

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.